NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Health

Terms of Reference

Review of Events around Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in Nova Scotia
May 2004

Background On April 28 Health Minister Angus MacIsaac announced a review of factors associated with possible exposure to CJD through medical procedures at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre. Shortly thereafter, a second case of CJD was identified with a connection to the Yarmouth Regional Hospital. A joint review, involving the provincial Department of Health, Health Canada, Capital Health, and Southwest Health will be undertaken to establish events and to apply the lessons learned from this experience throughout the provincial health system.

Fundamental to our commitment to continuous improvement of Nova Scotia's health care system is the critical examination of process strengths and weaknesses. All of the district health authorities engage in quality review activities which contribute to ongoing improvement. This provincial review will bring together the organizations involved, build on the lessons learned by each, identify areas of cross-over, and make recommendations for the benefit of the entire health system.

Mandate The Review Team is responsible to:

- review the actions and experience of the organizations involved in two recent cases of suspected CJD

- develop recommendations to improve procedures for preventing and managing exposure to CJD in Nova Scotia

Scope The review will focus on the lessons learned from activity associated with the two suspected cases of CJD identified at the end of April 2004.

Opportunities for improvement identified within the quality reviews of Capital Health, Southwest Health and the Nova Scotia Department of Health will be examined.

Issues which crossed the jurisdiction of each organization will be examined jointly.

Process

A preliminary report will be completed within three weeks of finalizing the review team membership.

The review will be coordinated by the Office of the Provincial Medical Officer of Health.

Recommendations will be presented to the Minister of Health for approval prior to public release.

Confidentiality of information pertaining to individual cases will be maintained at all times.

Membership

An objective external consultant will be appointed by the Minister to chair the review team; this will permit all participating organizations to participate fully and on an equal footing.

The Office of the Provincial Medical Officer of Health will coordinate the review.

The Quality Division of the Department of Health will provide support to the Chair of the Review Team and to the review process.

Review team members will represent:

Independent, external chair

Health Canada

Provincial Medical Officer of Health

Nova Scotia Department of Health - Acute and Tertiary Care Branch

Capital Health

Southwest Health